

Project Information Sheet

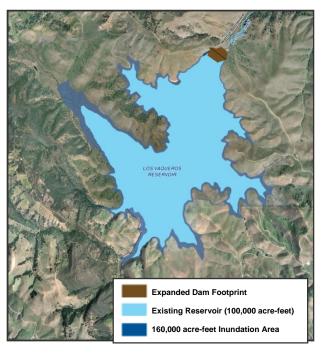
April 2011

Los Vaqueros Reservoir Expansion Project

The expansion of Los Vaqueros Reservoir from 100,000 acre-feet to 160,000 acre-feet will improve the Bay Area water supply reliability and water quality while protecting Delta Fisheries. The Bureau of Reclamation was the lead federal agency and the Contra Costa Water District (CCWD) was the lead state agency for the Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR). CCWD is the local owner of Los Vaqueros and completed the EIS/EIR with additional funding provided by Reclamation and the California Department of Water Resources (DWR).

New facilities for conveyance and storage, and better linkage between the two, are needed to better manage California's water resources, for both the estuary and exports. Existing Delta water conveyance systems are inadequate and must be improved. Similarly, existing groundwater and surface water storage capacity is inadequate and must be improved. Linking improvements in these two areas is critical to California's water future.

Delta Vision Report, December 2007



Project Benefits

- Improve the water supply reliability
- Improve the quality of water supplies especially during droughts and in late summer/fall months, despite deteriorating Delta water quality
- Protect Delta fisheries through operational flexibility
- Provide enhanced recreation facilities including new hiking trails, fishing piers, and an improved marina

Project Summary

The Final EIS/EIR was approved by the CCWD Board of Directors on March 31, 2010. The legal challenge period ended with no legal complaints filed. Los Vaqueros is the first of four ongoing California storage projects to have met this significant milestone. CCWD is moving forward on construction of an expansion to 160,000 acre-feet.

- CCWD is locally funding 100% of the construction costs to expand the reservoir to 160,000 acre-feet.
- Contracts for dam construction and recreation design-build have been awarded and are under way.
- The project will provide immediate local benefits, including new job creation, but will still keep option open for future expansion to 275,000 acre-feet with commitments from agency partners.

Project Schedule

Construction on the dam facilities began in March 2011 and will be completed in approximately 18 months. Construction activities on the recreation facilities will begin this summer.

Recreation During Construction

The 20,000 acre Los Vaqueros Watershed has become a popular East Contra Costa County outdoor destination. Beginning in March 2011 through completion of construction on the dam, the north side of the watershed, entered by way of Walnut Boulevard in Brentwood, will be closed to the public for safety reasons. The south side marina, accessible from Vasco Road, will remain open during most of the construction period. Fishing, hiking, and other recreation programs will continue on the south side barring any public safety issues. Descriptions of available recreation programs and hours of operation can be seen on the CCWD website (www.ccwater.com).

Background

The Sacramento – San Joaquin Delta supplies water to more than twenty-three million water users in California. At the same time, the Delta provides essential habitat for a diverse array of fish and wildlife. There are many challenges in maintaining a balance between water use and the environment including ecosystem restoration, water quality, and water supply reliability. The Los Vaqueros Reservoir, located in Contra Costa County, was identified by state and federal agencies as a potential surface storage project that could contribute to improving the quality and reliability of Bay Area drinking water supplies, and ecosystem restoration.

CCWD owns and operates the existing Los Vaqueros Reservoir in Contra Costa County to improve water quality for CCWD customers, provide stored water for emergencies, and improve the Delta habitat. Water is pumped into the reservoir from the Delta during high water flows, when the water is generally low in salts and other contaminants and when impacts to Delta fisheries are low. CCWD then blends water from the reservoir with Delta supplies during periods of lower quality.

The reservoir also allows CCWD to reduce impacts on aquatic Delta species at the water intakes. With the Los Vaqueros Reservoir, CCWD can reduce or eliminate seasonal water pumping when sensitive fish species are near the intakes, increase pumping during periods when fish are not present, and shift pumping between various intake locations.

The reservoir serves as an important emergency storage facility that can be used if CCWD is not able to divert water from the Delta. The Los Vaqueros Reservoir also provides recreation opportunities, flood control benefits, and important terrestrial habitat in the watershed.

The initial studies focused on determining if an expanded reservoir could meet state and federal program goals and the Contra Costa Water District's (CCWD) Board Principles. Because the existing Los Vaqueros Reservoir was financed entirely by CCWD customers, one of the Board Principles required any proposed expansion be placed before CCWD voters before proceeding with the permitting and approval process. In March 2004, 62% of CCWD customers voted in favor of Measure N and authorized the project to move forward.

Additional Reports

The EIS/EIR and the additional reports described below are available on the studies website (www.lvstudies.com).

April 2008 Scoping Report

The Scoping Report presents a summary of the issues raised during scoping and provides a blueprint for how these issues would be addressed in the EIS/EIR.

July 2006 Initial Economics Evaluation Report for Plan Formulation (IEEPF)

The IEEPF provides an economic and plan formulation update to decision-makers at Reclamation and the Office of Management and Budget. The IEEPF determined that expansion of Los Vaqueros is cost effective and can be implemented while meeting the CCWD Board Principles.

December 2005 Notice of Intent (NOI) and January 2006 Notice of Preparation (NOP)

The NOI published by Reclamation in the Federal Register notifies agencies of the preparation of the EIS/EIR for the project. The NOP published by CCWD describes the proposed project alternatives reviewed in the EIS/EIR and identifies the main environmental issues to be addressed during the environmental review.

November 2005 Initial Alternatives Information Report (IAIR)

The IAIR describes formulation of initial alternative plans to address the problems, opportunities, and planning objectives identified that primarily involve enlarging the Los Vaqueros Reservoir.

April 2004 Final Draft Planning Report

The Final Draft Planning Report presents the information developed during this planning phase of the Los Vaqueros Reservoir Expansion Studies and incorporates comments received to date.

For More Information

- Visit the Los Vaqueros Reservoir Expansion Project page on the CCWD website at www.ccwater.com
- Or, contact the CCWD Public Information Office at (925) 688-8109